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C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 000701

SIPDIS

OFFICIAL INFORMAL

FOR SA/INS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/27/14

TAGS: AMGT CE MV LTTE

SUBJECT: OFFICIAL INFORMAL NUMBER 062 (04/27/04)

Classified by DCM James F. Entwistle for reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

CONTENTS: LTTE FACTIONAL VIOLENCE

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(C) FYI. Despite the recent collapse of Karuna's positions in the east, factional infighting in the LTTE appears to be on the upswing. The recent trail of violence includes:

-- Seven LTTE cadres were reportedly killed in Batticaloa District late April 26. According to contacts in the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) and the Sri Lanka Army (SLA), the LTTE has alleged that several Karuna supporters killed three Tiger sentries at a checkpoint. The assassins then proceeded to a nearby general store, where four disabled Tiger cadres were killed. SLMM spokeswoman Agnes Bragadottir told poloff on April 27 that Tiger political chief S.P. Thamilchelvam had lodged a formal complaint with the SLMM, alleging that Karuna supporters had entered into Tiger-controlled areas in the east through army-controlled areas in order to perpetrate the killings. Despite the LTTE claims, Military spokesman Col. Sumeda Perera told poloff on April 26 that the military had no involvement in the incident. In an effort to mediate the situation, Per Rosendahl, head of the Batticaloa SLMM office, told poloff that a meeting between the LTTE and the SLA would take place on April 28 with SLMM facilitation.

-- In an incident that took place in the early morning hours of April 26, a mine exploded, killing a Tamil reported to be a Karuna supporter. Police are investigating the incident, which occurred in a small village near the north-central town of Kurunegala.

-- In a third incident, a Tamil was killed in north Colombo the evening of April 26. In the incident, assailants shot at two Tamils (identified as Karuna supporters by police), killing one of the men and critically wounding the other. Police contacts have reported that no group has yet taken responsibility for the Colombo killing, but the incident bears all the hallmarks of the Tigers' "pistol gangs." (POL)

-- On a brighter note, UNICEF gave us an encouraging briefing on the LTTE child soldier issue today. Frontchannel on child soldiers later this week.

LUNSTEAD